WHAT TOMMY DID

F. Davidson

WAKING UP. Frontispiece.

WHAT TOMMY DID.

BY

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TO THE BOYS AND GIRLS OF

THE LITTLE CORPORAL,

THIS LITTLE VOLUME IS DEDICATED,

IN LOVING REMEMBRANCE OF TEN YEARS OF PLEASANT COMPANIONSHIP.

EMILY HUNTINGTON MILLER.

Chicago, 1876.

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WHAT TOMMY DID.

CHAPTER I.

HOW THE WEEK BEGAN.

THE first day, of course, was Sunday. Sunday always comes first in my week, though I have heard people say it came away down at the end, after Saturday. It came first in Tommy's week, but he didn't know much about it until he waked up one morning and found the sun shining very bright, and wondered why his mamma

didn't get up and dress him. Then he crept out of bed, and went to the window, and stood there in his night-gown, watching an old robin that was feeding her babies with worms for breakfast. The baby robins opened their mouths very wide, and seemed to relish their breakfast, which reminded Tommy that he wanted his own. But when he turned around from the window, he saw his new red trumpet lying on the floor, and he picked it up and blew it very loud indeed. It waked up everybody in the house. Bridget thought it was the milkman, and clattered out to the door with one foot half way into her shoe; and Tommy's mamma opened her eyes very wide, and said,

"Why, Tommy Bancroft! didn't you know it was Sunday morning?"

And that was the first Tommy ever remembered about Sunday. After breakfast, Uncle Jim didn't go to the city, but sat and read with his pretty new slippers on, and Tommy was dressed up in his white linen clothes and buttoned gaiters, and had his yellow hair curled into queer little curls that didn't stay in very well, and went with his mamma to a great house with a bell on the top of it. They called it a church. Tommy's mamma told him he mustn't talk in church. There were a great many other people there, and nobody talked at all, except one man in a kind of a box high up at one end, and that man talked all the time. Tommy thought perhaps he didn't know any better. There was a little girl in the next seat, with a blue and white feather in her hat. She

looked at Tommy a good deal, and Tommy looked at the feather. He wondered if it was a rooster's feather. He thought that he should like to have a rooster with such feathers. Then the little girl's hat began to move about; then there were two hats and two blue and white feathers—Tommy saw them; then three hats, then four, then the whole air was full of them, and Tommy laid his head down on his mother's lap and didn't remember any more.

They must have gone home after a while, for Grandma Bancroft was there to dinner, and she had her black velvet bag with beads around the bottom. Tommy liked to play with the beads, and sometimes Grandma Bancroft used to open the bag and give him some caraway seeds, or red and white peppermint

candies. This time she gave him two raisins, and asked him if he could tell her about the sermon.

"They didn't have any of them fings to *my* church," said Tommy, innocently.

He thought about it while he was eating his raisins, and then he said,

"Was that what the men passed around in the boxes, dramma? I didn't take any of that. Wish't I had."

Grandma tried to explain about the sermon, and told the little boy that the minister was trying to tell the people how to be good. But Tommy didn't understand.

"He didn't speak to me, 'tall," he insisted; "kept talkin' to himself all the time. Course if he talked to me I should understood him; *what you s'pose?*"

But, by and by, mamma took Tommy on her lap, and told him all about Samuel, the little boy that talked with God; and about David the shepherd boy that slew the great giant; and about Jesus, the dear Savior, who lived and died to save just such little boys as he; and then Tommy felt very good and very loving, and meant to mind his mamma as long as he lived, and always let the baby have his red ball and his trumpet, and say please to Bridget, and not cry when his face was washed. He said his little prayer very earnestly and heartily, though he was sound asleep two minutes afterward. And after that, Sunday always came regularly in Tommy's week.

CHAPTER II.

HOW IT WENT ON.

MONDAY was Tommy's own day, and he liked it the very best of all. First, because it was washing day, which was the very reason mamma *didn't* like it. He knew it was Monday the minute he waked up, because there was his red plaid dress and gingham apron for him to wear. He always wore that dress on washing days, and baking days, and days when mamma was too busy to look after him; and Tommy's heart gave a great jump of delight when he saw it, for he knew

he could dig in the dirt with the fire shovel, and nobody would say,

"*Why, Tommy Bancroft, look at your new clothes!*"

When his mamma dressed him, she said,

"I can't stop to curl your hair this morning, because it's washing day;" and then Tommy was gladder yet. When he was a man, he meant to have all his hair cut close to his head, so nobody could curl it — it always made him so cross to have it pulled.

After breakfast, his mamma tied his old straw hat under his chin, and told him to run and play, like a good boy. Tommy went straight out to the sink drain in the back yard. There was quite a little river of soap suds running through it, and Tommy fished in it

awhile with the handle of his mother's parasol that he found on the hall table. She shouldn't have left it there, you know. Then he thought he would build a dam across the drain, and he threw down the parasol and went in to get the fire shovel to dig with. Bridget was cross, and said she wanted the shovel herself; did he think she was going to put in coal with her fingers? Then he thought he would take a knife, and while he was looking for one he spied his mother's silver pie knife in the spoon basket. It was broad and flat, pretty much like a shovel, and Tommy thought he could make it do.

"Course she'd let me take it; won't hurt it, 'tall," said Tommy to his conscience; but he was very careful to keep it out of Bridget's sight as he trudged

back to the drain. He found a nice, soft place to dig dirt, in the middle of one of mamma's flower beds. It was full of little sticks, to show where the seeds were planted a few days before; but the seeds had not come up, and Tommy thought it must be because there was too much dirt. He pulled off his hat for a cart, and it was splendid fun to load it up with the pie knife, and drag it to the drain by the ribbons. Pie knives are not made to dig with in the dirt, and pretty soon it began to curl up at the point, and then the handle doubled down sidewise, and Tommy threw it down with the parasol, saying to himself, "I guess Uncle Jim can fix it."

While he was squatted up in the very middle of the drain, somebody emptied another tub full of suds, and it came

swashing along and washed Tommy and the dam away together. He gave one little squeal of astonishment; but, though he was very wet and muddy, he only put on his dirty little hat and started after the gray kitten that was watching a bird under the raspberry bushes. He chased her three times around the garden and twice under the fence, but he couldn't catch her, though he tore the brim half off from his hat, and did something to the skirt of his plaid dress that made it hang down around his feet. Then he went into the coal cellar, and climbed up and down the great mountain of coal, and played he was a traveler, climbing up some icy mountains, like some men Uncle Jim read about. When he was tired of this he thought it must be dinner time, so he started for the house.

There was an elegant carriage at the gate, and he wondered if his Aunt Louise hadn't come to bring him the velocipede she promised him. He went to look for his mamma, but she was not in her room, or the dining room, or the nursery. So he walked straight into the parlor, and there was his pretty mamma, in her nice, ruffled morning dress, and there were two strange ladies and the *minister's wife!*

Dear, dear! how his mamma looked! She felt as if she should faint away; and the strange ladies said, "Is this your youngest, Mrs. Bancroft?" and tried not to laugh; but the minister's wife said, "Come here, Tommy;" and then she gave right up and laughed till the tears ran down her cheeks. Tommy's mamma laughed, too, though she looked at first

as if she were going to cry; and Tommy stood there with his old, torn skirt hanging down over his muddy little trousers and stockings, his old, torn hat brim flopping about his shoulders, and his hands and face and his long, yellow hair all black and grimy with coal dust, and wasn't one bit ashamed!

CHAPTER III.

WHAT BECAME OF THE MUCILAGE.

IF it had not rained that day, it never would have happened; but, before Tommy had half finished his breakfast, Uncle Jim got up and walked to the front window, and remarked that it was "raining cats and dogs."

Tommy looked up, with his mouth full of bread and butter, to see if Uncle Jim was really in earnest; but as he looked perfectly sober, he immediately scrambled down from his chair and

rushed to the window, expecting to see a shower of black and white kittens, with a smart sprinkling of curly dogs. What he really saw was a very muddy river, rushing along through the gutter; two men, with tin pails and short pipes, tramping down the street; and a miserable-looking dog, with a bone in his mouth, picking his way through the mud. He looked as if he might have rained down, but Tommy knew he didn't, because he knew where he lived up the alley, and he had often seen him sneaking around the back door after bits which Tommy threw away when he took his lunch out-doors. Just at that instant Uncle Jim came in from the back hall, and said, in a very dreadful voice,

"Now, then, Tommy Trotter, where are my rubbers?"

When anything was lost in that house they always asked Tommy about it. It was a habit they had of supposing that Tommy had had it, especially if it was something he never ought to touch.

Tommy forgot all about the cats and dogs, and looked at Uncle Jim, and said, quickly, "I d'n know."

That was a habit Tommy had, and he always said, "*I d'n know*," before he stopped to think. But he did know very well, and so he said,

"O yes, Uncle Jim. They're over to Billy's house, in the big *troft* where the horse drinks. Me and Billy sailed 'em for boats, all full wid oats, and they sinked down to the floor of the water."

"Why, Tommy Bancroft," said his mamma, looking greatly troubled, "what shall I do with you?"

Uncle Jim looked at him very soberly, and said,

"Well, young man, here I am, two miles from my office, and no rubbers. I should like to know what you mean to do about it? You ought to buy me some more. I shall catch my death of cold, and *then* how'll you feel, sir?"

Tommy's little face brightened in a minute.

"O, I'll buy you some more," said he; and he trotted away to get his bank, which had a loose floor, so that whatever you put in at the top could be easily shaken out at the bottom, an arrangement Tommy found very satisfactory. The first thing that came out was a quarter, new and crisp, but Tommy's heart never faltered.

"There," said he, "you can buy some

more rubbers, and I won't never sail 'em in the troft."

"Very well," said Uncle Jim, putting the money in his pocket, and going into the hall.

"Uncle Jim," called Tommy, "if there's any shange left, you buy me some peanuts, will you?"

Uncle Jim nodded, and said, "I shouldn't wonder," as he strode out into the rain.

Tommy's mamma gave the baby her breakfast, talked awhile with Bridget about supper, dusted the parlor, watered the ivy in the bay window, and then she put the baby on the floor in the dining room, and gave her some clothes pins and a tin pan to play with. Tommy had his Noah's ark, but he had to keep it on the table, because the baby put

the camels and elephants into her mouth whenever she got a chance, and once she sucked all the paint off from Shem, Ham and Japheth, and made herself quite sick. Ellen was ironing in the kitchen, and Mrs. Bancroft said,

"Now, Ellen, it is such a rainy day, nobody will be in, and I am going up to look over the winter clothing and put it away. The children will do very well in here, but you must keep your door open, and look in once in a while."

"Yes'm," said Ellen; "Tommy 's gettin' right handy to mind the baby when he tries."

"O, I'll 'tend to her," said Tommy, who was trying to stand Mrs. Noah on the ridge pole to the ark. "Ellen needn't mind about us at all."

So Tommy's mamma went away up

stairs, and Ellen hurried with her ironing, looking out once in a while through the rain to see if the grocer's young man was not coming for his orders. When he did come, she shut the dining-room door, because the baby was always frightened at the grocer's young man, though Ellen herself did not seem at all afraid of him.

It was just at this moment that Tommy spied a bottle of mucilage on the clock shelf over the table, and it struck him instantly what a fine thing it would be to fasten on the elephant's trunk and Noah's head again. It was quite easy to reach it and pull out the cork, but there did not happen to be any brush, so Tommy was forced to use one of his fingers, which answered very well, only he had to wipe it frequently upon his apron. Noah's head refused to stick,

and so did the elephant's trunk, though he tried it on nearly all the animals.

Then he concluded he would paste up handbills, as he had seen men do on the street. So he got baby's little, soft, white hair brush, and poured out some of the mucilage into the seat of Uncle Jim's table chair. Then he dipped the brush, and stuck pieces of the morning paper on the walls, on the doors, on the stove, and, last of all, he happened to remember how he had seen a funny man walking through the streets with handbills on his hat and his back, so he pasted some papers on the baby's back, and on the top of her poor, little, bald head. Baby had no hair to speak of, but she did not at all fancy this way of dressing it, so she set up a loud scream of anger, and

at that very moment came a ring at the door bell.

"Dear, dear!" said Tommy's mamma, peeping out at her chamber window, "if there isn't Miss Dilly Dean come to spend the day."

Mamma hurried down to the door to receive Miss Dilly, who stood in the hall, with the inky water running off from her umbrella, and making a little, black river on the oilcloth.

"You didn't look for me to-day, I'm sure," said Miss Dilly, "but I thought I should be sure of a good, long visit all to myself, because it rained so."

Ellen went back to try to hush the baby, and Tommy stood in the door with the hair brush in his hand, while mamma said,

"Well, come right into the dining

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room, Miss Dilly, and dry your feet; we keep a fire there on account of the baby."

And Tommy kept on staring at Miss Dilly's funny little curls, until mamma pushed Uncle Jim's chair to the grate, and said,

"Sit right down here, Miss Dilly;" and Miss Dilly sat down.

Mamma began to pick up things about the room, and by and by she found the empty mucilage bottle, and she said,

"Why, Tommy Bancroft, where's my mucilage?"

Then Tommy put his finger in his mouth, and looked at Miss Dilly harder than ever, and said, "*She's sittin' on it.*"

Miss Dilly jumped up as spry as a kitten, and the chair jumped, too; and

Miss Dilly's best alpaca dress was just about ruined.

I don't know just what Tommy's mamma said to him, but whatever it was, she put him to bed afterward to think about it.

And that was what happened on Tuesday.

CHAPTER IV.

TOMMY AND THE DOCTOR.

THE next day must have been Wednesday, but Tommy did not remember much about it, for long before morning he began to feel very sick. He had bad dreams. First he thought an elephant picked him up with his long, crooked finger, and tucked him away in one corner of his big mouth, and Tommy felt very hot and uncomfortable in there. And then he thought he had swallowed the elephant, and found him very cold and

heavy, and altogether too large for his quarters. And the next Tommy knew, his mamma was standing by his crib, with a lamp in her hand, looking very anxious, and that set Tommy to crying. He cried so long and so loud that Uncle Jim came to see what was the matter. Uncle Jim looked very sleepy; said he guessed Tommy would be all right in the morning; most likely he had eaten something. Now that was one of Uncle Jim's aggravating ways; whenever Tommy was sick, he always insisted it was because he had "*eaten something*," as if boys were not always eating something. When he had said this he felt as if he had done his whole duty, and went back to bed contentedly; but Tommy's mamma soothed, and petted, and fussed

over him until morning, when she told Uncle Jim that, in her opinion, Tommy was a very sick boy, and must have the doctor at once. Uncle Jim finished his breakfast and then went into the bedroom chewing his toothpick. He sat down by the bed and took Tommy on his knee.

"Well, sir," said he briskly, "are you going to the city with me, to-day?"

Tommy tried to smile, but he only sneezed five times in succession.

"My dear child! where's your handkerchief?" exclaimed Uncle Jim, groping about in a bewildered fashion, as if he supposed little boys had half a dozen pockets in their nightgowns, and carried handkerchiefs in them all. Mamma rushed to the rescue, but, by that time, Uncle Jim had solved the

difficulty by wiping Tommy's nose with the corner of the white counterpane.

"It's only a cold," he said, putting him back in bed; "but if it will be any satisfaction to you, I'll have the doctor come around and look at him. I wouldn't worry about him, though."

As if the dear little woman could help it!

Doctor Smith was out of town, so Uncle Jim sent Doctor Brown, a very pompous individual, but quite good natured. He looked at Tommy, and Tommy's mamma watched him very suspiciously. He looked at his tongue, and felt of his pulse, then rubbed his hands together and asked,

"Has he eaten anything to disagree with him, madam?"

"*Not a thing*," said Mrs. Bancroft,

positively. "I'm very particular about his diet."

Then the doctor looked closely at Tommy's face, which was quite red and blubbery, partly with the cold and partly with crying so much; he looked behind his ears and under his chin; lifted the yellow hair from his neck, and said,

"Hm—m; has your son ever had the measles, madam?"

"Never," said Mrs. Bancroft, faintly.

"Then he has them now, madam," said the doctor, blandly; "a very clear case, and coming out finely." And he nodded his head at Tommy as if it was a delightful thing to have the measles.

Then they all went out, but presently the doctor came back with a spoonful of nice, red jelly, and said,

"Here, my little man, is something

very nice for you; let me see you take it."

Tommy had never been deceived about medicine, so he sat up directly and took it in his mouth, but it tasted very badly, and he would have spit it out, only the doctor looked very fierce, and said, "*Swallow it, quick,*" in such a dreadful voice Tommy dared not do anything else.

The doctor went away laughing, as if it was a good joke to cheat a little boy; but Tommy lay down on his pillow, with his honest little heart full of indignation. By and by he said,

"Mamma, don't doctors have to tell the troof, like other folks?"

Tommy's mamma wished him to respect the doctor, but she thought it a great deal more important that he

should respect the truth, so she told him that everybody was bound to speak the truth, and that it was not right to deceive sick people, or cheat little boys.

Tommy grew worse instead of better. There were the little red spots on his neck, but no more measles came out, and his mamma began to grow alarmed. She wondered if the doctor knew so very much. He wasn't *her* doctor, and she had not a particle of confidence in the good sense of any other doctor in the world but her doctor. What if Tommy should die? And then she remembered all his naughty little pranks, and wondered how she could have been so vexed with him about the mucilage, and thought, if he only got well, she would never be vexed with him again. About noon she sent Ellen for Uncle

Jim, and begged him to telegraph to New York, for Tommy's papa to come straight home. Uncle Jim sat down by Tommy again, and began to question him. Uncle Jim was a very obstinate man, and he still believed Tommy had "eaten something."

"Where was he yesterday?" he asked.

"In the house all day," said mamma; "don't you remember how it rained?"

"He was over to Billy's, ma'am, about tea time," said Ellen; "you mind you said he might go and play in the barn."

"O, yes," said mamma. "I had forgotten; but it was only half an hour or so, and he had on his rubbers."

"Did you play in the water, Tommy?" asked Uncle Jim.

"N-no," said Tommy, faintly; "only we tried to catch it in our moufs, where

it runned down the roof, and it went down our backs, and felt awful funny."

"I should think so," said Uncle Jim; "and what else did you do?"

"Noffin; only played."

"Played what? What did you *eat?*" persisted Uncle Jim.

"Noffin," said Tommy, "only I was Billy's horse, and — O, yes, Uncle Jim, he gave me some *shopped feed.*"

"Chopped feed! what on earth was that?" asked Uncle Jim, glancing triumphantly at mamma.

"Why, turnuts and oats, shopped in a pail, and water mixed in," said Tommy, with the pride of an inventor.

"Raw turnips and oats! there's a delightful mixture for you," exclaimed Uncle Jim; "and you ate that stuff, did you, Tommy?"

"Y-e-e-s," said Tommy, faintly, as if it were not quite pleasant to remember; "I used to like *turnuts*."

Mamma looked perfectly horrified. Ellen pulled the corner of her apron and giggled as loud as she dared; but Uncle Jim leaned back in his chair and laughed a great, hearty, ringing laugh, until you would have thought the windows rattled.

"Anything more, Tommy?" he said, at last; "did you take condition powders?"

"No," said Tommy, "but Billy rubbed my neck with *gogling oil*, 'cause I had the — the *marrow bones*."

"Gargling oil! That accounts for the measles," said Uncle Jim, laughing again; and then he wiped his eyes, and told Ellen to bring him a glass of warm water, with a teaspoonful of mustard in it.

"Now, Tommy," said he, "I want you to drink this all down; every drop."

"Is it good?" wailed Tommy.

"Not very," said Uncle Jim, taking a little sip; "it isn't very bad, either; and if you will drink it all before I count ten, I'll buy you a jack knife."

Tommy drank very fast, and Uncle Jim had only counted eight, when the last drop was swallowed, and Tommy asked with a shudder when he should have the knife.

"To-night," said Uncle Jim, watching Tommy curiously.

Perhaps you have taken warm water, with mustard in it. If you have, you know just what happened, and why Tommy lay upon his pillow about ten minutes afterward, looking red about the eyes, and white about the mouth, but feeling a great deal better.

"Now, youngster," said Uncle Jim, "I'm going straight after that knife, but I shall not get back till tea time, so if you go to sleep the time will pass before you know it."

Tommy did go to sleep, and slept so long his mother began to worry again, but by the time Uncle Jim came home, a sturdy little voice shouted from the bedroom,

"Uncle Jim! where's my knife?"

"Ah!" said Uncle Jim, "I believe I have mistaken my profession. I should have been a doctor."

CHAPTER V.

"APERIL FOOL!"

TOMMY was mending his hobby-horse. He always mended it whenever he got any nails, but it didn't seem to improve it very much. The trouble was in the head and legs. First the head split off just at the arch of the neck. Hobby-horse's heads always do break off there. Uncle Jim put it on with glue and fastened a red leather collar over the seam. It was very fine, and the horse looked better than ever; but, bless you, it didn't last any time at all. So Tommy mended it, and, because it

would keep tumbling off, he turned it around and nailed it that way, which was just as well. Why shouldn't a horse look over his own shoulders if he chose? The fore legs gave out next, and after a good many experiments Tommy nailed them on the sides of the body, with some nails he picked up by Mr. Hardware's scrap pile. They were large nails and took a good deal of pounding, but they held well, only of course the fore legs spread a trifle too much. Then the hind legs broke off, and nobody could make them stay on, not even Uncle Jim, and at last Bridget burned them up for kindling. After that the horse always looked as if one end of him had sat down to rest, and the other end was looking around to see what was the matter; but Tommy liked him

AFTER THAT THE HORSE LOOKED AS IF ONE END OF HIM HAD SAT DOWN TO REST.

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just as well. He played the horse was not sitting down behind, but rearing up in front, and he would saw at the reins, and hold him in, and say, "*Hey, there, two-forty!*" just like the men at Billy's stable. I forgot to say that Tommy had sheared off the horse's mane and tail and put them into the water-trough to make hair snakes. Billy's mother said they'd turn into snakes, but they never did. Well, Tommy was mending his horse. This time it was the stirrup. The strap was old, and he had just found a splendid new one. It was a part of Uncle Jim's shawl strap. Just as he had the right measure Billy came to the alley gate and called "H'llo!"

Tommy laid the strap on the piazza and went to see what Billy wanted.

"Say, Tommy, did ye know it's April Fool to-morrow?" whispered Billy, mysteriously.

"No. What for?" asked Tommy, greatly puzzled.

"O, to fool fellers," said Billy. "You put things around for greenies to pick up, and pin strips of newspapers on their coat-tails; but I'll tell ye the best go. You tie a string to a pocket-book, and put it on the sidewalk, and hide behind the fence, and when fellers go to pick it up you yank it back and holler 'April Fool!' at 'em."

Tommy saw the joke and laughed a little.

"You c'mover an' we'll try it," said Billy.

"No," said Tommy, suddenly growing virtuous, "I musn't 'sociate wid

you," and he walked away from the crestfallen Billy.

All that day Tommy was meditating on the mystery of "Aperil Fool." He quite forgot it at bed-time, but next morning, as Uncle Jim was looking from the window Tommy heard him laugh heartily, and squeezing in before him, saw a very pompous young gentleman strutting down the street with a long strip of white cloth dangling from his coat, while a couple of ragged newsboys danced and capered in delight.

"He's tored himself," said Tommy, but just then the cry of "April Fool!" rang out, and Tommy understood.

While Uncle Jim was adjusting his gloves, Tommy made a hurried search in his mother's work-basket, and finding a whole piece of magic ruffling,

managed to secure the end to a button behind his uncle's coat, and had the satisfaction of seeing the long white ribbon — yards and yards of it — fluttering down town in the rear of Uncle Jim's new spring suit. He was so delighted with his first success that he forgot to say "Aperil Fool!" until it was altogether too late, so he turned his attention to another trick. He had no pocket-book, but there was his pretty red savings bank, that would do as well, or better; and while mamma was searching for her ruffling to finish baby's aprons, and wondering what had become of Tommy, that young gentleman was in the middle of a tangle of lilac, syringa and arbor-vitæ, holding fast to one end of his red and white lines, and wondering why somebody didn't pick

up the bank. The lines lay like a gay little path across the sidewalk, leading through the fence to the clump of bushes, where Tommy's eager face was plainly visible, and the sell was so transparent that people passed it with a laugh. At last a big boy came along. He had his hands in his pockets and was whistling "Shoo Fly," but when he saw the bank he stopped, set his ragged boot firmly on the line, picked up the red bank, with all its jingling contents, and walked rapidly away.

Tommy was so intent upon getting ready to say "Aperil Fool!" that he did not comprehend what had happened until the boy disappeared, bank and all, around the corner, and then he ran to the gate screaming,

"Bring it back! I want my bank!"

"April Fool! April Fool!" shouted some boy across the street, and Tommy ran sobbing to mamma to tell her the sorrowful story.

"Well," said mamma, "I'm sorry about the bank, but if it teaches you not to play silly tricks again, I shall be willing to have you lose it. See here, Tommy," and mamma lifted her hair and showed him an ugly scar just above her temple.

"Oh!" said Tommy, in a horrified tone, "did a Injun scallup it wid his choppenhawk?"

"No," said mamma, "a boy did that; a boy not much bigger than you, who wanted to play a trick on April fool day."

"I'd a shutted him in jail, if I'd been there," said Tommy, fiercely.

"He tied a string across the walk in such a way that it lay on the ground, but could be tightened by pulling one end, and then he hid behind the fence and waited for some one to come along. Two little girls came by, chattering and skipping, and never looking at the ground until, quick as a flash, their feet struck the string. One of them rolled over in a funny little heap and jumped up laughing, but the other lay with her poor little head on the curb stone and her blue eyes shut fast, as if she had been asleep. She wasn't asleep, though, and when they lifted her up, there was blood on her yellow curls, and running down her white face. Somebody carried her home, and the little boy, who had done all the mischief, followed after, crying all the way.

The doctor came and shaved off the pretty curls, and looked very grave, and there were days and days when nobody could tell what would be the end of it all."

Mamma saw the tears in Tommy's eyes, so she said gayly, "But, after all, the little girl did get well, and the yellow curls grew out again, and here she is, this very minute, but you may be sure she never wants her little Tommy to try any April fool tricks."

Tommy drew a long breath and hugged his mamma, saying,

"Oh, you dear mamma, I'm so glad you came here." Then he thought a little and added, "Where was you, mamma, 'fore you came,—was you up in heaven?"

Mamma was having one more hunt

for the lost ruffling, and did not answer, so Tommy asked again,

"What do peoples sit on in heaven, so 'em won't fall frew? Do 'em have 'tones?"

No answer, and Tommy walked away, saying,

"Guess I'll go and look frew my mikerscofe."

CHAPTER VI.

PANTS!

SOMETHING mysterious was going on. When Tommy came into the sitting-room mamma and Uncle Jim were looking at something by the window, and he distinctly heard Uncle Jim say,

"Very nice, especially the buttons; don't you think now you could have squeezed in a couple of dozen more; a row down the back for instance?"

Then mamma laughed, and made believe box Uncle Jim's ears, but when

Tommy came nearer her he could not see a thing to put buttons on.

That night, when he climbed into his crib, mamma told him that when he waked in the morning he would find something very nice in the chair beside it. He thought it would be very hard to wait so long, but it only seemed a minute or so before he waked up and heard the robins singing with all their might out in the cherry trees. Mamma was brushing her hair, moving about very softly, so as not to wake baby, and Tommy sat right up and looked about him, rubbing his eyes with his fat fists. Sure enough, there was "*something*" on the chair where he had left his plaid dress and ruffled panties. A new dress? No, not a dress at all, but the prettiest little suit

—jacket and pants of soft, gray cloth, buttoned with shining pearl buttons, and trimmed with braid. Tommy could hardly believe his eyes, but he was on the floor in a twinkle, laughing and chuckling, and trying to put his pants right on over his long nightgown. Mamma was almost as much pleased as Tommy was, and she helped the little fellow to dress, and swung the mirror back, that he might see himself from head to foot.

"Just like a man," giggled Tommy, thrusting his hands into his pockets; and baby lifted her precious little head from the pillow, and stared at him with her great, blue eyes, as if she wondered who that boy was.

"She don't know me," said Tommy, in still greater delight. "*She* won't

never have pants, will she?" he added, in a tone that was partly pity and partly triumph.

When he went out to breakfast, Uncle Jim pretended not to know him, and said, "Good morning, sir! Very fine weather we are having."

And then he asked mamma if she expected Tommy home pretty soon.

"Why, Uncle Jim," said Tommy, showing two great dimples in his hard, red cheeks, "*I'm* Tommy! Don't you see I'm got pants?"

"You Tommy?" said Uncle Jim, looking very much astonished; "I should think not; you're a young gentleman; Tommy's a little girl, and wears dresses."

"I ain't never goin' to be a girl any more," said Tommy; "pretty soon I'll have boots, and long sleeves to my shirt."

Tommy was quite indignant because his mamma pinned a napkin around his neck at the table, but Uncle Jim begged her to pin *his* napkin around his neck, and informed Tommy that gentlemen often did so at the restaurants. So Tommy was consoled.

"I suppose you won't care about eating peanuts and candy, any more," said Uncle Jim, as he went away.

Tommy was walking about with his hands behind him, trying to make his shoes squeak. He stopped and looked at Uncle Jim, to see if he was in earnest. There was a twinkle in his eye that reassured Tommy, so he went on squeaking his shoes, and wondering what Billy would say to him. He determined to go over immediately and see, but mamma spoiled that plan by

telling him not to go outside the gate on any account, or do anything to soil his new clothes, because his papa was coming home that very morning, and Tommy must look his best. Tommy forgot Billy, and jumped around on one foot for joy, and wondered if his papa would know him in his pants and jacket.

"Maybe he'll think it's Uncle Jim," said Tommy to himself; and then he put on his uncle's rainy-day hat, and marched up and down the porch. When he got tired of this, he went into the kitchen to see Bridget, and discovered, to his great delight, that it was baking day, and all manner of nice-looking and nice-smelling things were being made. Generally, Bridget sent him out of the kitchen quick as a wink, but to-day

she was pleased with his new clothes, and she was going to ride with her cousin in the afternoon, so she said,

"La sakes! just to look at the fine young gentleman! An' would you be plazed to take a sate, sir?"

Tommy giggled, and sat down in the chair by the end of Bridget's table. He sat very still for a few minutes, watching Bridget's bare, red arms, as she beat the eggs for a plum pudding.

"O Bridget!" he said, suddenly, "you're got holes in your elabows." Then Bridget laughed till she got two more holes right in the middle of her round, fat cheeks.

After a while Tommy forgot about being a gentleman, and began to tease Bridget for raisins, and currants, and bits of citron, and tastes of jelly, and

lumps of sugar. He put the nutmeg grater in his pocket, and at last, in leaning upon the table to see just how Bridget made the scallops on the pies, he managed to plant his elbow right in the middle of a cranberry pie all ready for the oven. Tommy screamed and so did Bridget—Tommy in dismay, and Bridget in anger, which only made matters worse, as anger always does; for when Bridget jerked Tommy up from the table with a shake that landed him on his feet in the chair, he staggered and tottered, and fell over backward, plump into the great bread pan, which stood there full to the brim with a mountain of white, puffy dough. O dear! but that was a fix to be in! and by the time Bridget had pulled Tommy out with her floury hands, rubbed his elbow

with a towel, and scraped his pants with a big knife, you may be sure the new clothes were a sight to see.

Mamma thought she should cry, at first, it was such a disappointment, you see; but one look at Tommy's miserable face made her so sorry for her poor, little man, that she comforted him very bravely, washed his sticky hands, and let him keep on his pants, though they did look funny behind, especially when they came to dry, as if Tommy had been pasted up somewhere, and just broken loose.

Tommy went out into the yard again, and Lion, the big dog, got up from his rug by the door and came smelling around him, as if he suspected a strange boy had come into the yard. He didn't seem to approve of the new clothes at

all, for he went back to his rug with a growl of disgust, which amused Tommy very much. He followed Lion and curled himself up beside him, and laid his head on his shaggy side.

"Are you tired, Tommy?" asked his mamma, looking out at the window.

"O no," said Tommy; "I'm just a finkin."

It was very warm and sunny, so Tommy's mamma let him keep on "*finkin*," and when his papa came home he found him there fast asleep.

Perhaps you think that was enough for one week, but it wasn't, for Tommy's papa brought him a music box that would play three tunes, and a set of toy horsemen that rode up and down to the tune of "Captain Jinks," when you turned the handle of the box they stood

upon, so of course he had to go over after dinner to show his treasures and his new clothes to Billy. The result was dreadfully disappointing, so far as the new clothes were concerned, for that young gentleman sniffed up his nose at them in decided disapproval.

"Ho!" said Billy, "they're most like a girl; only come to your knees, and no *galluses.* I don't have *my* clothes that way."

Tommy stared with his big eyes, and wondered what "galluses" might be, but had not a doubt that there was but one proper way to make clothes, and that was just like Billy's. Now Billy's mamma never troubled herself about the spring fashions, or any other fashions. She had half a dozen boys, and when the older ones out-grew their clothes,

she just cut off the legs a little, patched the knees and elbows, and passed them on down the row. Billy's present pants happened to be a little long, and a little *baggy*, but that was a fault time would remedy; so after inspecting them a moment, Tommy unbuckled his little trousers at the knee, and stretched and smoothed them down over his scarlet stockings. It was no use; at the very best they would not reach his ankles.

"Tell ye what," said Billy, "if ye had some *galluses* them pants would reach down."

"Y-e-s," said Tommy, in bewilderment.

The inventive Billy went directly to work, and manufactured a pair of suspenders out of some old red reins. The short trousers were unbuttoned from the jacket and let down to a desirable

length, the "galluses" fastened on with pins and twine, and then Billy surveyed his work with triumph.

To be sure, there was a noticeable gap between the top of the trousers and the bottom of the jacket, but the red suspenders bridged it over, and Billy remembered to have seen the same lack upon Jake, the hostler, so both boys were satisfied.

"There, now," said Billy; "now you look something like."

He didn't say like what, and Tommy didn't ask; but they played with the soldiers till Ellen rung the bell for tea. Then papa and mamma, looking out at the parlor window, saw a funny little figure coming across the yard, with gray trousers dragging over its feet, red suspenders stretching down in front across

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a puff of plaid flannel shirt, and a gay little plaid banner streaming bravely out in the rear. Tommy's papa laughed and shouted, and felt like rolling on the floor, and he called Uncle Jim and he laughed, too; but though Tommy went to the window the minute he got in, to see what the fun was, he couldn't see anything at all.

CHAPTER VII.

TOMMY AT SCHOOL.

TOMMY'S mamma was feeding her canary. In one hand she held a bunch of fresh, green chickweed, just gathered from the corner of the garden, and with the other hand she was pushing the little tender sprigs through the bars of the cage. The canary sat in his ring, turning his pretty yellow head from side to side, and now and then picking daintily at the tiny buds and leaves. Tommy was standing by the door, dressed in a clean suit of

buff linen, and he looked a good deal like a canary bird himself, with his bright, round eyes, and his yellow curls all smooth and glossy. Somebody came in at the gate. It was Callie Trumbull, on her way to school. Callie looked very nice, too, in her pink gingham frock and white apron, with fluted ruffles; and the minute she saw Tommy she exclaimed,

"O Tommy Bancroft! you do look too lovely in that suit. I just wish I could take you to school."

Tommy's mamma looked around and smiled at Callie, and Callie looked at her so beseechingly, that when she said, "Do, please, let me take him," mamma hesitated a minute and then said,

"Well, I don't know as I care, if you

will be very careful about the crossings, and lead him all the way home."

Callie promised very eagerly, and Tommy was too much delighted with the prospect of going to school to care much about the conditions. So his mamma got out his straw cap, with its band of green velvet, put a clean handkerchief and a scalloped cooky in his pocket, and then kissed him on both cheeks, for goodbye.

"Be a good boy, Tommy," she said; "sit still in your seat, and don't talk out loud."

"O, I know," said Tommy; "we've played school lots of times, me and Billy; it's most like goin' to church, 'cept that the minister whips 'em if they don't say their Sunday-school lesson."

"O, Mrs. Bancroft," laughed Callie, "isn't he too funny?"

Baby toddled to the door, and reached her fat, little hands after Tommy, and Tommy felt very grand, as he walked away just like a man, and left mamma and little Tot behind.

Callie and he got along very nicely until they reached the schoolhouse yard, when a whole troop of girls rushed out and swarmed around them like so many bees.

"O, what pretty curls! O, isn't he sweet? Is he going in your room, Callie? O, let me have him till recess, and I'll give you half a stick of gum." So they chattered, and exclaimed, and kissed poor Tommy, and pulled him about, till he wished in his heart that he was safe home again.

"He's going with me," said Callie, decidedly; "I'm to take care of him every blessed minute, because I promised his mamma. Come, Tommy;" and Callie led him bravely through the crowd toward the steps. Four boys were playing marbles close by the steps, and one of them looked up at Tommy and said,

"Hullo! here's a new girl come to school. How de do, sis?"

"What cunning little shoes; and what pretty curls she has got," said another boy, teasingly.

Tommy's heart was full of indignation, and, for the first time, he felt ashamed of his buttoned gaiters, and wished he could change his glossy curls for the stubby black hair of the boy who laughed at him. Callie gave the

boy a glance of contempt. She didn't care a bit what Doc. Flynn said — a great, big fellow, ten years old, that read in the first reader, and couldn't spell "*biscuit*."

The bell rang just as they were going up, and Tommy was nearly crushed in the rush for the door; but Callie held him up and jerked him along, and, though a boy twitched one of his curls, he shut his lips bravely, and didn't cry. In a minute more they were in the schoolroom, and Callie gave Tommy a seat beside her, where he began at once to look around and feel more comfortable.

He liked the looks of the schoolroom pretty well. There were bright-colored maps on the walls, and a long blackboard at one end, with some queer

marks on it. The teacher was a very pleasant young lady, with a funny kind of spectacles fastened to a ribbon at her belt, which she perched occasionally on her nose in a way that looked to Tommy decidedly uncomfortable. He could not see what made them stay on, and began to get quite nervous about it, when, all at once, a little bell tinkled, and Callie's class was called up to read.

"You sit still," she whispered to Tommy; and Tommy said "Yes," right out loud, which made Callie blush as red as a rose.

When the class stood up they quite hid Tommy, and a boy right opposite him leaned across the passage way and whispered slyly,

"Settin' with the girls!"

The taunt was thrown away, for it never had entered into Tommy's innocent little head that it was not nice to sit with the girls. So the boy tried another line. He began to make funny pictures on his slate, and show them to Tommy. There was a pig smoking a pipe, and a goose with a hat on; and when Tommy saw them he laughed out quite heartily. The boy looked very sober, and the teacher came and patted Tommy's head, and said,

"Keep still, little boy."

As soon as she was away, the boy took a handful of marbles from his pocket and showed them to Tommy, and Tommy got right up and walked over to his seat. The teacher put on her spectacles and looked at them a minute, and then went on hearing the

class. When Callie went back to her seat she was greatly distressed, and tried to get Tommy back, but the young gentleman was very well contented, and the teacher bade her let him alone. The boy gave Tommy a piece of red crayon, and let him paint the pictures in his reader, and when his class was called he seized Tommy by the hand and marched him along. Now Tommy couldn't read the least bit, any more than his mother's canary, but Billy always told him that it was because he had never been to school, so Tommy stood up in the class, and took hold of the corner of Bubby Steele's reader, fully expecting that now he was going to read. There was a picture of a boy riding on a pony, and Tommy looked at the pictures very hard while the

boys read. When it came Bubby Steele's turn he spoke up very loud, and said,

"One fine day George got on his pony to ride a few miles into the country, to visit his Cousin Charles. His cousin lived in a large farmhouse—"

"*Next!*" said the teacher, and Tommy began to read as loud and as fast as he could, and this was what he said,

"It wasn't his Cousin Charles, it was his gramma, and she has sticks to her spetacles to stick over her ears; and she gave me two red apples and a doughnut, and the pony runned away 'cause a turkey gobbler gobbled at him, and the boy wasn't 'fraid 'tall; and that's the end of it."

You see, Tommy thought the boys were just making up stories about the

picture, as he sometimes did with his rhyme book. The boys all laughed, and so did the teacher, and she told Tommy that would do very well for the first time. Then they went on reading, and Tommy watched the teacher's spectacles until, all at once, he said, suddenly,

"I sh'd think they'd pinch your nose that way; try 'em on me, will you?"

Then they laughed again, and, after that Tommy went back to the seat with Bubby Steele, and traded his cooky for half of a pair of broken scissors, and tried to chew rosin until his little white teeth were all gummed up; and insisted on going out to play with the boys at recess, and came in with grass stains on both knees, and the ruffle torn half off from his collar. Poor Callie was

as miserable as she could be, at the thought of taking him home in such a plight, and actually planned to take him to the gate, and then run away.

After recess he sat with another boy, who wanted Tommy's little handkerchief for the sail of a ship which he had smuggled away in his desk, and Tommy sold it to him for a bottle of red ink, made out of pokeberry juice. He put the bottle in his breast pocket, and, as it was only corked with paper, of course the ink leaked out, and made him look as if he had been shot through the heart.

Half an hour before school was out, he shut up a great, clumsy jack knife on one of his soft, little fingers, and frightened the teacher so that she dropped her spectacles, and poor Callie

stood by, crying louder than Tommy did while the unlucky finger was bound up. Then the teacher said Callie had better take Tommy home; and a very forlorn couple they were, when they presented themselves to Mrs. Bancroft.

"O, my poor child!" screamed mamma, "what has happened to him?"

At this both the children began crying louder than ever.

"O, dear, dear!" said mamma, half distracted at the red stains, and the torn clothes, and the bandaged hand; "O, Tommy, what is it? are you killed?"

"Course I ain't killed," said Tommy, "nelse I couldn't scream. I cutted my finger wid a boy's knife, and that ain't bleed on my jacket, only but red ink, and I've got a whole bottleful."

By this time Tommy was in pretty

good spirits. Callie managed to tell her story, and mamma was so much relieved, she told her not to feel badly about it, but she guessed Tommy was too little to go to school.

When Tommy was sitting at dinner, all sweet and clean again, his papa asked him how he liked school.

Tommy looked very thoughtful, as he said,

"I didn't like it pretty much, 'cause my red ink didn't have any stopper, and it made me too tired to study."

CHAPTER VIII.

MORE MISCHIEF.

THE day began beautifully. When mamma and Aunt Louise peeped in at the sitting-room door, they saw Tommy and his cousin Lu, just as sweet and clean as two pinks, with their heads close together over the elephant book, while Robert was telling them the stories. I'm afraid Robert was not quite particular to tell them according to the book, but they were very funny, at any rate, and mamma said,

"That's right, Robert; you look after the children a little, and tell Ellen to see that they keep their clothes clean. We shall be back by lunch time."

It seems strange, but it is perfectly true, that the moment Robert was set to amusing the children, he began to find it hard work, and remembered at least six different things that he was anxious to finish. So first he went to the window and whistled, then he took all the things out of his pocket and looked them over, and finally he went out doors, telling the children to stay there till he came back, and that was the last he remembered about them until noon. They got on very well at first. Lu told the stories. This is the way she told them,

"That's a corkadiul; he's swimmin'

in de mud. Corkadiuls is a-w-ful; they eat up little heevun babies 'at won't say dey prayers, an' de chillen to my Sunday school we buy some mishnaries wid our pennies to shoot 'em wid."

"Le's punch that old corkadiul," said Tommy; and so they punched him till they made a hole through his head. Then they turned over the leaf.

"That's a lelliphant's nest, I b'lieve so, and that's a *norstrige;* he's a goin' to eat up de eggs, an' de men is chasin' him to fly him away from 'em. Dose kind of horses is to catch lierns wid; dere backs hump up so people can hold on better."

"Le's punch de old norstige," said Tommy; and so they punched him until there was nothing left but the tail and one leg.

"THAT'S A LELLIPHANT'S NEST, I' B'LIEVE SO."

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After that they put the book away and played hunt lions. Lu was the lion; she carried off Captain Jinks between her teeth, and shook him until his head rolled off, growling fearfully all the time. And Tommy rode after her upon the poker, and rescued Captain Jinks, and screwed his head on again.

"Le's go up in my Uncle Jim's room," said Tommy, "he's got a truly sword and a knappersack, and he don't care if I take 'em, I maybe."

"Well," said Lu, and up they went. They couldn't reach the sword, which was fortunate, but the "knappersack," which happened to be a haversack, was put on, and the canteen filled with bay-rum and hair oil.

"Here's a sword," said Lu, pouncing

upon Uncle Jim's precious razor strop, "if you only had a belt."

"Here's Uncle Jim's bellit," said Tommy, dragging an elegant sash from a drawer.

"I want that," said Lu, "it's most like mamma's; play I was a lady goin' to a party."

"No," said Tommy, "I want it; it's my bellit." Lu gave it up, for just then she spied a box full of neck ties, and sat down to try them on her doll. The long ones made lovely sashes, and Lu tied and untied them with great satisfaction, while Tommy paraded up and down, the ends of the long crimson sash trailing magnificently behind him. Presently the razor strop suggested a new idea.

"Goin' to shave," said Tommy, pushing a chair to the bureau.

Lu was at the wash-stand by that time turning on the hot water to give her dolly a "bath-ing." Tommy found the cup of creamy soap, and the soft brush with its ivory handle.

"Uncle Jim let's me take 'em," he said complacently, and Uncle Jim really did sometimes; and then with a little tremor of his hands, he took the keen razor from its box and laid it down.

"Goin' to shave me some whiskers, like Uncle Jim," he said, rubbing the soap to a white froth, and climbing with dripping hands upon the bureau to bring his face close to the glass. Then he brushed the lather over his cheeks and chin; how funny he looked! Across his nose and his upper lip; Tommy had to stop to laugh; then a little more on his cheeks, and some on his forehead.

He nearly forgot the razor, but by and by he picked it up very cautiously, grasped his slippery nose between his slippery thumb and finger, and looked quizzically into the glass.

Just about this time it occurred to Ellen that the children were unusually quiet.

"They're dead sure to be in mischief," she said, putting down the baby and hurrying up stairs. No one in the sitting-room, but she could hear Lu singing her last Sunday-school song:

"Oh, I'll be a good child, as ever I can be,
I'll mind what my teacher says to me."

Following the voice she came in just as Lu had champooed the last hair from dolly's head with Uncle Jim's tooth brush, and Tommy was preparing for the first sweep of his razor. His

'GOIN' TO SHAVE ME SOME WHISKERS, LIKE UNCLE JIM."

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back was towards the door, but he saw Ellen's horrified face in the glass, and the razor dropped from his hand. It might have sliced his poor little nose off, but it only grazed his fat cheek, so that the white lather was stained with blood. Tommy and Ellen shrieked together, and Lu added her voice to the chorus. But when Ellen found there was no serious harm done, her fright gave way to anger, and she shut both the children into the closet, while she did her best to repair the mischief by putting the wet razor into a glove box, and "rinsing off the illegant sash" in the wash bowl.

When mamma came home she was dreadfully distressed about it all.

"O dear, Tommy," she said, "what *does* make you so naughty?"

"God do," said Tommy, gravely; "makes everyfin'."

"No," said mamma, "it is naughty little Tommy himself, and he makes his mamma's heart ache."

Tommy looked very sad, and promised heartily to do better.

When papa came home he took him on his lap, and asked, just as he always did,

"Has my little boy been good to-day?"

And Tommy said, very honestly,

"No, papa, I was *awful much* naughty, and made my mamma's stomach ache."

CHAPTER IX.

LITTLE RUNAWAY.

TOMMY was in the country. The regular country, with up hill and down, where there are pastures with wild strawberries, and orchards with robins' nests in the trees.

Papa was there, too, and mamma, and Aunt Louise, and little Lu; and Lu had her dog Pedro, that knew almost as much as a boy.

"Such a *safe* place for Tommy," said mamma, rocking contentedly, and folding the tenth tuck in baby's new dress. "I don't worry a mite about him; no

lake to drown him, no cars or carriages to run over him, no bad company for him to get into. I am just taking solid comfort."

All the time Tommy and Lu were chasing the lame turkey around the barn yard, penning up a toad in the pump spout, painting stripes on the kitten with some green paint they found in the cellar, and having a good time generally. Then they got some cookies and swung on the gate, eating them.

"Wish my papa would come," said Lu. "My papa's going to bring me a new dolly."

"Wish my papa'd come," echoed Tommy. "Le's go way up top tip of the house, and look wa-ay off, ever so miles, an' see 'em come."

Patter, patter went the little feet,

through the hall and up stairs, and pat, pat came Pedro, running after.

Up in the garret was a queer, spicy smell from the catnip, and spearmint, and boneset, drying on papers under the eaves. A wasp that had found his way in at some chink was buzzing spitefully at the window, and a few great, stupid flies crawled slowly up the slippery panes and tumbled down again. Lu wouldn't go to the window; she was afraid of wasps; so they looked for something to play with. First Tommy was a 'spressman, and drove away with a mountain of trunks, and a little old Testament in his pocket for a "memberandel book." Then he was a doctor, and brewed some famous tea for Lu, mixing the herbs all together in a red bandbox. When they were tired of this

they went down again, and looked out at the window by the landing of the stairs. That was a pleasant window. The cool, sweet wind came in from away over the hills, and they could see the crooked road along which Tommy's papa and Lu's papa came riding every night, with such pockets for little fingers to explore. Tommy and Lu looked out, and Pedro put his paws up on the broad sill and looked out too, with a wise little wrinkle on his black nose, and one ear cocked up.

"I see 'em," said Lu, eagerly, "way, way off!"

"Where?" said Tommy, crowding close. "O, I see; one is my papa and another lady."

"It's *my* papa, and a lady," said Lu, slowly but positively, as she decided

that one of the travelers in the distance was not a man. A little later she saw with disgust, that the one man was fat old Deacon Giles, who took off his hat to wipe his bald head as he drove by.

"'Tain't *my* papa," said Lu, provokingly.

"'Ain't *my* papa," said Tommy, promptly; "my papa's got a top on his head."

No one else came along the crooked road, and the children grew tired of waiting.

"Mean to go and meet my papa," said Tommy; "I'm awful lonstum, stayin' here so much."

Lu didn't say anything. She had been expressly forbidden to go beyond the yard with her blue shoes on; but Tommy ran up and down the road at pleasure, and she felt as if it would

somehow hasten matters if Tommy went to meet papa and the dolly.

"Papa 'll be glad," said Tommy. "He'll tight up the lines, and say, "*Where did you been?*"

"Well," said Lu, "I'll stay here and watch."

"My papa'll be glad," said Tommy, holding a little argument with his conscience. "He'll say, 'where did you been?' and I'll put my arms around his neck, and hug him dest as tight, and I'll say, "oh my *per-escious* papa, has you got any peanuts in your pocket?' An' papa'll say, '*Feel in my pocket.*' An' what ye s'pose'll be in the paper? You s'pose peanuts?"

By this time Tommy was trotting down stairs. Pedro ran after him a few steps, then stopped and sniffed in a

puzzled way, but finally went back to Lu at the window. Mamma glanced up from her sewing to see a little bare-headed figure go past the door. Ellen stopped in the middle of a story she was telling Nora about her ride with the grocer's young man, to see the same little figure march out at the back gate, and then mamma and Ellen forgot all about it. Lu at her window watched and watched. She saw the bare head go bobbing down the first hill, then disappear for a while and go creeping up the next one, looking less like a bare head and more like a gray speck. Then it disappeared again, and though Lu watched and watched, it did not come in sight. So she curled herself up in one corner and shut her eyes. Pedro, seated on his curly tail, tried his best

to keep up the post of observation, but by and by he gave it up and went to sleep too.

"How dark it is growing," said mamma suddenly, and looked out to see a great storm cloud rolling rapidly up from the west. "Poof!" came the first gust of wind, shutting the hall door with a slam, right in mamma's face, and sending the long white curtains fluttering out at the windows.

"The rain is right upon us," said Aunt Louise, running up to shut the windows, while mamma went to the kitchen to ask Ellen where the children were.

"Sure ma'am, they're playin' in the garret, I'm thinkin'," said Ellen, but even as she spoke, she remembered the bare-headed figure.

"Lu is here, fast asleep," called Aunt Louise, leaning out among the plashing drops to fasten the blinds.

Lu, wide awake, could only tell that Tommy had gone to meet his papa, and she had watched him go over the second hill; all which made mamma determine in her frantic heart to go straight after him through the storm.

"You'll never be so foolish," said Aunt Louise. "Tommy is safe enough. It's a straight way, without a turn or a cross-road from here to the station, and the most he can get is a wetting and a good scare; it won't hurt him in the least."

Which was very well for Aunt Louise to say, as long as she had her own chick safe, but not what mamma felt, with her poor little naughty dar-

ling shivering and shrinking at the white blinding flashes, and the awful rattle and crash of the thunder, while the pouring sheets of rain fairly wet him to his bones. So mamma thought, but in fact it was not so.

Runaway Tommy trudged on very comfortably for a much longer way up the crooked road than his feet had ever gone before. He found a good deal to amuse him besides watching for papa, and when the rain began to fall had just discovered a great red farm cart, taken off from its wheels and set upon four blocks by the road-side. He climbed in and played that he had a hack of his own, and was so delighted with the discovery that he did not mind the rain until it came pretty fast, and the thunder began to

scold and say, "*Where's naughty Tommy?*" Then he looked around and cried a little, but thought better of it, and crept under the cart.

Not a drop of the rain came through. It was just high enough to let him sit up, and when the rain poured the fastest only a few spatters drove in. But Tommy was thoroughly frightened; he was sure the thunder scolded him, and he locked his fingers tightly together and never took his eyes from the road until between the peals of thunder he heard the rattle of wheels over the stones.

"Papa!" he screamed, but his voice was drowned completely, and all at once he thought of the chance of being left there alone. So he crawled bravely out and stood in the drenching rain,

shouting at the top of his sturdy little voice, "Papa! Papa!"

The wagon came nearer. Somebody heard the call. Somebody else said it wasn't anything, but papa knew better. Clear down at the bottom of his heart was something, I cannot tell you what, that answered the voice and made papa draw up the reins and say, "Hark!"

"Papa! Papa!" it called again, and a dripping figure ran from the weeds toward the wagon. "Papa, it's me; I came to meet you."

Not a word about peanuts, and not a word did papa say. He only held the little soaking, slippery fellow close in his arms, and never minded how the water ran from him in streams and puddles, until they drove under the shed and he sprang out, ran into the

house and set the runaway down among the frightened people.

Mamma hugged him and forgave him that instant, but Aunt Louise wiped her eyes and scolded him soundly, until he was carried away to be dried. The warm rain did not hurt him a mite, and he came out to supper rosy and triumphant.

"You ought to punish him," said Aunt Louise, severely.

"He's punished enough, poor lamb," said mamma, tenderly.

"He doesn't care a bit," said Aunt Louise, "and next time he may not come off so well."

"Tommy," said papa, taking the little culprit on his knee, "don't you think you were naughty to run away?"

"Yes," said Tommy, "I'm got my new shoes on, papa."

"Mamma was so frightened I'm afraid she'll be sick," said papa.

"Oh, too bad," said Tommy, ruefully, giving mamma a sudden squeeze about the head as she knelt by him, "Docker must give her some nux."

"Tommy might have been lost if God hadn't taken care of him, and made papa stop——"

"That was *me* a callin'," interrupted Tommy, looking up from the new shoes he was admiring, "and I hurt me somewheres crawlin' frew; right here, on the elbone to my leg; did you know I'm got elbones to my legs? That's so they'll limber up."

CHAPTER X.

TOMMY'S FORF 'N JULY.

BILLY knew all about it. Billy had three big brothers, and his father kept a livery stable; so of course he knew most things. It was Billy that told Tommy, for the blessed little heathen couldn't remember that he had ever heard of Fourth of July. To be sure, there had only been four of them in Tommy's calendar, and the last two of those he had spent, with mamma, out at Grandma Bancroft's; and grandma hated torpe-

does and fire crackers as heartily as she loved Tommy, so there were plenty of nuts, and candies, and frosted cakes, but not a spark of gunpowder.

"Ho!" said Billy, "I've been to more'n fifty Fourth o' Julys, and they always have fire crackers and torpedoes; that's what it's for, and to drink lemonade and sody."

"I don't like sody," said Tommy, doubtfully; "once I ate some out of a little box, and it wasn't sugar." And Tommy made a wry face.

"'Taint that kind," said Billy; "they squirt it out of a machine, and it all goes up into a pile, like shavin' soap, and you wink your eyes shut and just swaller, without stoppin' to taste. I tell you it's bully."

"Y-e-e-s," said Tommy, winking very

fast, and trying to imagine the operation.

"You get your Uncle Jim to buy you some fire crackers," counseled Billy, "and we'll fire 'em off, to-morrer."

Tommy was a little uncertain about the result, for he had a general impression that his mamma didn't approve of fire or gunpowder; but that evening, as they sat at tea, he opened the subject.

"Uncle Jim," said he, gravely, "did you know to-morrow was a Forf 'n July?"

"Is it?" said Uncle Jim. "Are they going to have one this year?"

"An' Billy likes sody 'n water; you mix it up wid shavin's, and shut your eyes, and its—its—bully," said Tommy, innocently.

"Tommy Bancroft," said mamma, with

a look of horror, "where do you learn such words?"

"Billy told me that," said Tommy, complacently. "Billy knows lots of funny words."

"Evil communications corrupt good manners," said Uncle Jim, sipping his tea.

"An' Billy says you'd ought to buy me some fire crackers," said Tommy; "will you, Uncle Jim?"

"Ask mamma," said Uncle Jim, with a funny twinkle in his eye.

"O, Tommy, I'm afraid," said mamma.

"Ho!" said Tommy, "I ain't 'fraid 'tall. I da'st to fire a gun."

"Well, we'll see about it when papa comes home," said mamma, and that was just as good to Tommy as a promise.

The fact was, that mamma, and papa, and Uncle Jim, had discussed this question of fire-works, and the two gentlemen had stoutly maintained that Tommy was old enough to be trusted with the delights of celebrating the Fourth in regular boy fashion, and, after a good deal of protesting, mamma had yielded the point. And the reason papa was not at tea at that very moment was, that he had stopped on his way home to lay in a bountiful supply of crackers, torpedoes, grasshoppers, and other delightful things, which all boys know the names of better than I do. When Tommy went to bed, they were safely reposing in a big, square box on the shelf of the hall closet, and behind the door was a queer, long bundle, that mamma herself did not know about,

containing splendid rockets and Roman candles.

"It is only once a year," said papa, "and I mean to make it a glorious day to him." But privately I don't mind telling you that papa liked torpedoes and sky rockets as well as a boy, and so did Uncle Jim.

The racket began right after midnight, with all sorts of banging, and cracking, and popping, and fizzing, but Tommy slept the sleep of the blessed, and only waked at sunrise, with a whole broadside of crackers from the alley, sent off as a salute by his friend Billy.

"Somebody's a shootin'" said Tommy, opening his eyes in an instant. "Oh! it's Forf 'n July."

It was hard dressing a boy in such a tremor of excitement, and he wanted

to set fire to his whole assortment, and send them off at a crash; but he was finally obliged to content himself, until after breakfast, with a package of torpedoes, with which he strewed the piazza and the front steps, and kept up a constant snapping and cracking.

"Now, Tommy," said papa, after breakfast, "I'll show you how to fire your crackers."

So papa showed Tommy, and then Uncle Jim showed him, and then papa showed him again, and then Uncle Jim did; and so they kept showing him, until mamma was half distracted, and the whole house smelled like a battlefield.

All the time Billy had been squeezing his face through the alley gate, longing to come in, but not quite daring to venture, for the last time he had put

in an appearance at the house, Bridget had promptly seized him by a convenient superfluity of his garments, and landed him in a puddle on his own side of the fence. But Uncle Jim's heart grew warm with patriotism, and presently he spied Billy, and called him in, enriching him with two packages of crackers, and a splendid piece of punk.

Mamma frowned, but papa said, "Nonsense; we're all brothers to-day. Let the little wretch have a good time." And he let Tommy shoot crackers in the alley, under Billy's direction, until the young gentleman was brought up to a tremendous pitch of enthusiasm, and you would have thought there were at least ten boys out there, instead of two very small ones.

Then Uncle Jim opened his heart

still more, and volunteered to take both the boys down to the fruit stand at the corner and treat them; and that elegant gentleman actually walked out of the front gate, with the children following him, and paid at the fruit stand for two glasses of soda water, a pine apple, a bunch of bananas, and two immense oranges. Then he walked away, smiling and happy, and the children carried the fruit home, ate it on the sidewalk, and were cross and miserable all the rest of the day. They quarreled over the remnant of the torpedoes, and came to blows about the last bunch of crackers, because Billy accidentally dropped a match and exploded them all at once. The end of it all was, that mamma sent Billy home, tearful and indignant, washed Tommy's grimy hands

and face, and put him to bed, to sleep off his excitement and fatigue.

When he awoke, it was almost dark, and he heard a great deal of talking and laughing, and a jingle of glass and silver. And Ellen came in and dressed Tommy in his best Marseilles suit, and the baby had on her tucked muslin, with puffs and pink ribbons, and her hair curled in little, shining rings; and when mamma came and led Tommy into the parlor, there was a large company of people, eating ice cream and raspberries and cake. They made a great fuss about Tommy and the baby, as if they meant to eat them up; and they really did look sweet enough to eat. And then Tommy sat on his papa's knee, and ate raspberries and cream, too.

When it grew a little darker, Uncle

Jim disappeared, and all at once a splendid rocket shot up from the front yard, with a loud "*whiz*," and after that a Roman candle, and then some more rockets. And Tommy stood by the bay window, and fairly held his breath with delight. They kept it up for an hour, and the fireworks were a wonderful success; besides, they could see, in every direction, how the rockets and Roman candles shot up from other people's front yards, making a splendid show against the dark sky.

And afterward the gas was lighted in the parlor, and mamma played on the piano, and Uncle Jim sang some songs with a lovely lady in white tarlatan; and by and by they all went away. But I don't think Tommy will ever, ever forget that "Forf 'n July," not for five years, at least.

CHAPTER XI.

TOMMY'S MENAGERIE.

IT was all Uncle Jim's fault, every bit of it, because, if he hadn't taken Tommy to the museum, to see the wild beasts, and snakes, and curious animals, Tommy never would have thought of such a thing as a menagerie. And Uncle Jim wasn't very much to blame, either, for Tommy's papa and mamma went away for a whole week, and took the baby, and left him and Uncle Jim with only Bridget, and so, of course, they would get into *some* mischief.

Well, as I said, Uncle Jim took Tommy to the museum, and I couldn't begin to tell you how many wonderful things he saw — a canary bird that could dance on a tight rope and fire a gun; and a rooster without any head, that walked about and *crowed;* a lot of monkeys in a cage; and, strangest of all, what they called "The Happy Family," which was a great cage where a couple of cats, a dog, some white mice, a long-tailed rat, a lot of birds, and several other animals, all lived together. They didn't look very happy, but then they didn't eat each other up, and that is all you can say of some other "happy families."

Tommy talked a great deal about the museum, and thought about it a great deal more. He asked his Uncle Jim all

manner of questions, as they sat at breakfast the next morning. Uncle Jim was sipping his coffee and reading his paper and trying to make up his mind whether there would be a war in Europe or not, so he only listened occasionally to Tommy's questions, although he answered them just the same.

"Uncle Jim," said Tommy, "how you s'pose they caught that big snake?"

"Um, yes; I presume so," said Uncle Jim.

Tommy looked hard at Uncle Jim, and ate three mouthfuls of toast. Then he ventured again.

"Uncle Jim, what you s'pose they stuff up those birds wid? The ones in the big cage, wid their wings all fluttered out so?"

"Yes; most likely," said Uncle Jim.

Tommy didn't see the point, so he thought about it a little while, till Uncle Jim laid down his paper to butter a muffin.

"Uncle Jim," he began, "why don't that cat eat up the birds and fings?"

"O," said Uncle Jim, quite rationally, "they're used to living together. I dare say they didn't like it very well at first. Have a muffin, Tommy?"

Tommy decided to have a muffin, and while he was eating it, Uncle Jim went away, and Bridget came in and told him to finish his breakfast quick, for she was in a hurry. Tommy was never in a hurry, but he finished his breakfast, and went and sat on the back steps to feed his pigeons and watch for Billy. There were two white pigeons, with great, spreading fan tails, and

one beautiful slate-colored pigeon, with glossy feathers that shaded into green and purple and red, in the sun. They ran about on the clean gravel walk, with their pretty, red feet, cooing and chattering, as they picked up the corn Tommy threw them.

The great Maltese cat came up to Tommy, rubbing her sleek fur against his feet, and trying her best to say "good morning" to him. The pigeons were not at all afraid of the cat, and all at once it occurred to Tommy that he might have a happy family, if he only had a cage to put it in.

Just at this unlucky moment Billy came sauntering up the alley, eating a thick slice of bread and molasses. Tommy hailed him directly, and the two boys went out and sat in the door of the

woodhouse, while all the marvels of the museum were talked over.

It was a great triumph to Tommy, to be able to tell Billy anything he did not know, and his eyes grew bigger and bluer every moment with excitement.

"An' more'n a *million* birds, Billy, wid all their fedders and wings fluttered out, only but they couldn't fly; an' lots of awful big snakes, all stuffed full of fings they swallowed, an' little bits of snakes, all pickled up in *preserve bottles*, an' monkeys in a cage, but they was alive, and they don't never feed 'em 'cause it said you musn't on a card that Uncle Jim read; and I liked the monkeys best, 'cause they can just stand up in the air and hold on wid their tails."

"I've seen a monkey, myself," said Billy; "two on 'em."

"O my, Billy, you'd *ought* to see the 'Happy Family!'" exclaimed Tommy, frisking off from the step in his excitement, and then coming back again. "You see they don't like it at first, Uncle Jim s'poses, but they get used to it, and they all live together in a big cage. There's a cat wid a rat on her back, and some white mice running over a little dog, and some birds, and a monkey, and lots of fings."

"Tommy," interrupted Billy, "you go and ask Bridget for a cooky, and get one for me."

'Well," said Tommy, and away he went.

Bridget was just tying on her hat. She told Tommy she was going to market, and if he would be a good boy she would bring him two balls of pop-corn.

Tommy consented reluctantly, for he liked to go to market with Bridget; and then she gave him two cookies, and called him a "nice little gintleman."

While he was sharing his cookies with Billy, he ventured to tell him of his plan of getting up a happy family.

"Tell ye what," said Billy, "we can do it. Bob's got a big squirrel cage in the barn, and we'll put in my puppy and S'lena's white mice."

"An' I'll catch Muff and one of my pigeons," said Tommy, in an ecstasy of delight.

There was nothing at all to hinder, so the cage was brought over, the fat little puppy waddling after, as fast as his short legs would allow. I am afraid the white mice were smuggled away, for S'lena was very choice of her pets; but

they were brought, in some fashion; and then Muff was bribed into Billy's arms by a bit of cooky, and held fast; while Tommy expended all his skill in catching the blue pigeon, which seemed from the first to suspect something. There was no trouble in getting the mice into the cage — it was only to open their box and tip them in, and they hid themselves in a wink under the straw on the bottom. The blue pigeon went in easily, too, when it was once caught; but old Muff was a tight squeeze, and was only crowded through the door by vigorous pushing, yowling dismally, and leaving some bunches of fur by the way. As for the puppy, it was clearly of no use to try — so that part of the family was left outside.

But Muff smelt mice, instantly, and

pounced upon them, seizing one little unfortunate, while the other made his escape through the bars of the cage, and took refuge in the wood-pile. It was all over in a flash, while Tommy and Billy were consulting as to the possibility of taking off the bottom of the cage and putting Fido in that way. And in the meantime Fido waddled off and had to be brought back, so neither of them knew anything of the fate of the mice, and puss sat wiping her whiskers, and never gave a hint.

Yes, the bottom of the cage would come off; it was only fastened on with hooks; and after infinite trouble, Fido and Muff were squeezed in together and fastened there. Neither of them liked the situation. They had been perfectly amiable to each other in the back

yard and alley, but being shut up together in a cage was a different affair. So Muff began to spit and scold, and Fido to bark angrily, greatly to Tommy's surprise and Billy's delight.

"They'll get used to it, I guess," said Tommy, doubtfully; while Billy rolled on the floor and laughed at every fresh show of hostilities; and the blue pigeon perched in the top of the cage, and looked anxious and uncomfortable. In the midst of it all, Bridget came to the back door calling Tommy, and holding out two balls of pink pop-corn. Tommy ran instantly. Billy followed at a safe distance, and poor Fido gave a yelp and a plunge of despair, as he saw his master disappear. The bottom of the cage rolled one way and the top another. Muff made one bound and

disappeared under the woodhouse, Fido came tumbling frantically after Billy, and the blue pigeon sailed up to the roof to dress his rumpled feathers. Nobody ever heard from the white mice, but the happy family was considered a failure.

That night Tommy ate his supper very soberly, and scarcely spoke at all. Only once he asked, gravely, "Uncle Jim, how long you s'pose it takes 'em to get used to it?"

And Uncle Jim didn't know.

CHAPTER XII.

TOMMY'S BALLOON.

THERE never was anything half so wonderful. Tommy sat on the parlor floor and held it fast with his fat, dimpled hands, and drew his fingers softly over the smooth, round sides, and was almost afraid to breathe lest it should float away from him. Uncle Jim had just brought it from the city. He bought it on Clark street bridge, where a man stood with a dozen of them fastened to strings, and tossing up and down in the air, like beautiful,

great, red soap bubbles. When Tommy got tired of holding it in his arms, and tried to lay it on the floor, up it went to the white ceiling, and hung there, all shiny and glistening in the lamp light. Tommy pulled it softly down by the string, and then for a long time he played with it, until mamma came with the white night-gown, and took him away up stairs to bed. It was funny then that he couldn't lay his balloon away anywhere, but only let go of the string, and let it go up to the ceiling, right over his bed. He watched it as long as he could see, while mamma carried the lamp away down the long hall, and when she went down stairs the very last bit of light that came in over the top of the door shone straight on the balloon. Tommy meant to keep awake, so as to see it again when

mamma came up to bed, but by and by he shut his eyes a little, just to rest them, and then he forgot all about the balloon until morning, and there was the sun peeping in at the balloon, and the balloon peeping out at the sun, and looking more like a great, red soap bubble than ever.

They had milk toast for breakfast, but Tommy hadn't any appetite; and before the rest were half through eating he was out on the gravel walk in the front yard, looking up at his red balloon, with his round face fairly solemn with excitement. He only let it go a very little way at first, but after a while he let out the slender silk thread, and it floated about just above the top of the silver maple by the gate. Tommy sat down to watch it. He played he was in the balloon himself,

going right up to see the man in the moon. He couldn't see the moon anywhere, but he felt sure it must be up there somewhere.

Then he thought he would ask Uncle Jim to put a longer string to the balloon; he wanted to see how it would look away up among the lovely pink clouds that were floating about the east. So he pulled it down and held it fast in his chubby arms and started for the house. He started, but he didn't get there; for he stubbed his poor little foot against the wheel to the baby's wagon, and down went the bright face on the gravel walk, and out went the fat arms in the air, and, O dear! it almost makes me cry to think of it, away went the beautiful, round, red, shining balloon, straight up toward the pink and white clouds in the east.

Tommy picked himself up quick enough, and then looked around for the balloon; but of course that did not wait to be picked up — it was above the top of the silver maple. Tommy screamed, first for *mamma!* then for *Uncle Jim!* and they both came running out. So did Ellen, and so did Biddy the cook; but if all the Grand Army of the Republic had been there, it wouldn't have done any good. The longest ladder in the world would not have reached half way to the sky, and so the balloon floated airily away, while Tommy wailed and sobbed, and his mamma tried to comfort him, and Uncle Jim promised to buy him another balloon.

They all went in at last, and Tommy sat down on the grass, and watched his balloon till it was only a tiny speck in

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the distance, and then he went mournfully in to his mamma. He laid his head on her lap, and asked her, in a sorrowful little voice, where she supposed his dear, red balloon would go to? Would it go away up to heaven, and would the little angels have it to play with? and would he find it when he went there to live?

So his mamma laid down her work, and took the little boy on her lap, and told him this story — and it might have been true:

"Once there was a little boy that lived all alone with his grandmother in an old, dingy, brown house. The boy was lame, so he never could run and play, and he was poor, so he had no nice things to amuse him; but every day, when his grandmother was at work,

he limped out under the tree in the narrow yard, and lay there looking up to the sky. He liked to watch the clouds sailing over, and fancy they were ships and castles, and sometimes beautiful white angels. One day he saw, away up in the sky, a little dark speck, and as it came nearer and nearer, it dropped lower and lower, till it shone like a great, red star in the sunshine. The little boy sat up and watched it eagerly. Nearer and nearer it came — past the steeple of the church, past the tall chimney of the factory, right over the roof of the academy, almost touching it by this time. He stood up, leaning on his crutch, and saw it coming, always a little lower, right across the old, bare common, and over his grandmother's yard. He limped a step or two toward

it, caught at the trailing thread of silk that hung from it, and sat down, all trembling with delight, with the strange, beautiful thing in his hands. He did not know that it was a balloon that a little boy had lost, and that had come down because the gas had slowly escaped from it; he thought it was something God had sent him straight out of heaven. And he took a great deal of comfort with it, and kept it till it slowly lost its pretty round shape, and even then he loved it."

"That was a nice story," said Tommy. "I'm glad I know what 'came of my b'loon."

CHAPTER XIII.

TOMMY'S ADVENTURE.

BILLY had a wonderful stock of patience. To be sure he had very little to try it, for as he never had to go through with any washing or brushing or curling to speak of, he saved up all his stock to spend on more important matters. This special morning he had waited at the alley gate, with his sticky face pressed close against the bars, waiting and watching for nearly an hour in the vain hope that Tommy would make his appearance.

As for Tommy, he was in the house, trying to harness his kitten to baby's tin express wagon. The trouble was, that whenever kitty heard the wagon rattling behind her, she turned around quick as a flash, to see what was coming; and so Tommy had to begin all over again. He gave it up at last, and kitty crept away under the lounge to lick her fur into respectable condition, and Tommy sauntered out the door, quite undecided what to do next. Billy's patience then had its reward.

"C'mover here, Tommy," he called; "want t' show you something."

Tommy came down to the gate; like Parley the porter, he only meant to look through; but when he saw the doors of the livery stable all splendid with red and yellow posters, he marched

straight across the alley before he stopped to think.

"It's the cirkis," said Billy. "It's over by the soap fact'ry in a tent more'n a mile big; an' there's elfunts, an' rangatangs, an' camels higher'n a house, an' monkeys, an' everything."

"I saw monkeys to the musement," said Tommy, twisting his short neck to get a good view of a picture that was pasted on sideways.

"Ho, 'taint like them things," said Billy, scornfully. "The elfunts dance on one leg, and they have a horse that can read the paper, and fly in the air with a man standin' up on his back. My brother Sam seen 'em."

"I'll ask my Uncle Jim to take me," said Tommy, "or nelse papa."

And so he did; but he found, to his

great disappointment, that neither of them approved at all of the circus, so he was forced to console himself by admiring the pictures.

"I know the way," suggested Billy, temptingly. "You jest come down to the corner, an' I'll show ye."

Tommy did not mean to go any farther, but when they reached the corner there was a big store in the way, and they had to cross the street to see plainer. Then they walked along a little farther to see some gold-fish in a window, and then to see what a wooden Indian was holding out in his hand, and then to examine some red velocipedes, until at last they came to the street cars. Right at the corner there was one with a little flag on top, that said, in big letters, "TO THE HIP-

PODROME." Neither of the boys could read it, and if they could have done so, they never would have guessed what it meant. But Billy knew that the car with the flag went to the circus, so he said,

"Let's get in." And foolish little Tommy got right in.

There was nobody inside, but presently the car began to fill up, and, soon after they started, the conductor came through for tickets.

"Who pays for you, bub?" he said to Tommy.

"Papa, nelse Uncle Jim," said Tommy promptly.

The conductor looked around inquiringly, and Tommy explained,

"They didn't come, too; we're goin' to see the cirkis, me'n Billy."

"Have you got any money?" asked the conductor, smiling a little.

"Course, I'sh fink so," said Tommy, "in my tin savings bank; and a dollar besides of it, only it's lost down the 'frigerator hole to the parlor, where the warm comes up."

"I've got more'n that," said Billy, "only I borrowed it to Sam, and he don't never pay me."

"They're running away, the little rascals," said a good-natured looking man to the conductor. "The best thing you can do is to put them off at the next corner, and tell them to go home."

So the conductor put them off, and told them to run straight home, or the policeman would lock them up; at which Tommy began to cry, but Billy was not in the least troubled.

"Come on, Tommy," said he, boldly, "we're 'most there now."

"I want to go home," whined Tommy. "My mother says you're a bad boy, and I mustn't 'sociate wid you."

"You've got to come," said Billy, triumphantly; "'cause you don't know the way home. My mother says you ain't nothing but a big baby, with yer curls and yer white stockin's."

Tommy quailed at once before this awful sarcasm, and walked meekly along by Billy until they actually reached the ground, and found, to their dismay, that people were expected to pay for going to a circus. Half suffocated by the dust, trampled and jostled by the crowd, and frightened out of their wits, they finally made their way to a vacant lot behind the tent, and sat down to rest,

and think what to do next. The fence was covered with an awful picture of a man in a cage of wild beasts, and Billy's courage revived as he looked at it.

"Tell ye what," said Billy, "if I was a top o' that fence, I could peek in."

Tommy looked up hopelessly at the high fence, and made no remarks, but Billy began at once to make search for a board, and finally secured a short one, which he managed to drag from under a pile of rubbish, and leaned it against the fence. The first attempt at mounting brought him down with a sprawl to the ground.

"Jiggles too much," he explained, wiping his mouth on his jacket sleeve. "You'll have to sit down and hold it steady."

"I don't want to," said Tommy; "I

want to go home. My mamma wants me."

"You hold it," said Billy, "and I'll tell ye what I see, and then we'll go straight home."

So Tommy sat down and braced his back against the board, and Billy managed, after a good deal of jumping and squirming, to reach the top of the fence, where he hung suspended by his knees and elbows. He could see a good deal, much more than he expected; but, unfortunately a tall man on the inside of the fence saw him, also.

"Here, you little rascal," he called, "get down from there;" and he reached up and rapped Billy's fingers with the end of his cane.

Billy would have been very glad to get down, but his legs were too short

to reach the board by which he had mounted, so he dangled about for a while, until another rap on his fingers forced him to let go and drop to the ground, where he lay crying with pain and anger. Tommy cried, too, for company, and the noise soon brought a crowd about them. First, some idle boys, who began to tease and torment them, from the same spirit in which they would have tied a tin pail to the tail of an unfortunate dog; then a man, who advised them to go home; and then a fat old peanut woman, who had sold out her stock, and who scattered the rabble of boys with a few hearty cuffs, and pouncing upon the two children, dragged them out to the sidewalk.

"Now," said she to Tommy, "tell me where you live, my little man."

"I live in papa's house," sobbed Tommy, "wid mamma and Uncle Jim."

"He lives on Oak street," said Billy, beginning to recover his spirits. "I'm a taking care of him, and I know the way home — I *guess* I do," he added, looking around a little dubiously.

"You come along with me," said the woman; "I'm just going that way myself." And she kept fast hold of Tommy's hand, as she waddled along very much in the style of a big rocking chair out for a promenade.

When they reached the corner of the alley, she released Tommy, and the young gentleman went home without a word to Billy, who crept into the livery stable, feeling decidedly crest fallen.

"O, here he comes, ma'am," said Ellen, rushing down the yard and seizing Tom-

my by the hand. "Yer a nice b'y, now, to be scarin' yer ma into fits with yer vagabone ways!" And as she talked she dragged Tommy along and presented him to his mother, saying, "Here he is, ma'am, all safe and sound. I knew he would turn up."

Tommy's heart smote him, when he saw how pale his mother looked, and he laid his head in her lap and began to cry, penitently.

"Where have you been, Tommy?" asked his mamma, laying her hand gently on his head.

"To the cirkis, with Billy," sobbed Tommy.

"And you ran away! Oh, Tommy, mamma thought she could trust her little boy," said his mamma, sadly; and at that Tommy cried harder than ever.

They had a long talk about it, and Tommy was very much disposed to lay all the blame on Billy; but his mamma preached him quite a little sermon from the text, "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not;" and after a while he began to see that his part of the wrong lay in the *consenting*.

"But Billy's a real naughty boy, mamma," he added, "and I fink I'd better not play with him, 'cause he's always '*ticing* me, and I might consent."

His mamma thought so, too.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE STORY WITHOUT ANY END.

TOMMY had a sore thumb. The fact is, Tommy burned his thumb, and burned it pretty badly, too, while he was trying an experiment with steam. It happened in this way:

Wally Roberts was what they call a *genius*, which means he was always poking and prying about, trying to find the reason of everything; once or twice he had blown himself up with his experiments, but he kept on just the same. Well, Wally happened to be at Mrs.

Bancroft's when the tea-kettle was boiling furiously, sending a cloud of steam and vapor curling away from the spout. Tommy was playing that the kettle was his engine, and he ran about the kitchen tooting loud enough to deafen you.

"I'm lodomokif," said he to Wally.

"Wha-a-t?" said Wally, squinting at Tommy.

"Lodomokif; that's the man makes the toot go to the engine," explained Tommy. "See how the smoke comes out when I toot."

"It isn't *smoke*," said Wally, squinting at Tommy and the tea-kettle together; "it's *vapor*, and it *has* to come out, because the heat *expands* it. If you should stop up the *nose* to the kettle, the *lid* would fly off, and if you should fasten

down the *lid*, the kettle would *burst like a cannon!*"

Wally had a very emphatic way of talking, and the italics made a great impression on Tommy. He stood still all through this long speech; and when Wally went away he kept on looking at the tea-kettle, thinking how delightful it would be to stop up the nose, and fasten down the lid, and see it go off like a cannon. He could not think of any way to manage the grand result, but at least he could stop up the nose and see the lid fly off; and so he tried it with — what do you think? *Why, his poor little tender thumb!*

The lid did not fly off, but Tommy did, and he tooted louder than "lodomokif" himself. Bridget ran, and so did mamma, but nobody knew just

what had happened, for all the unfortunate discoverer could say was, "Oh, my fum! my fum! It's hurted mos' a def!"

Of course it stopped aching after a while — nearly all hurts do stop aching — but that was not the worst of it. The thumb was done up in linen rags, wet with some sort of disagreeable stuff, and poor tired Tommy could not go to sleep and forget his troubles, because he *couldn't put it in his mouth!* You need not laugh — it was no laughing matter to him, I assure you, for he didn't know how to go to sleep without sucking his thumb, any more than you would without shutting your eyes. That was how papa came to tell him the story. Mamma had gone over every one she knew, and at the end the big eyes were

as wide open as ever, and the dismal little voice wailed out,

"I can't go to sleep 'out my fum."

"Now, Tommy," said papa, "shut your eyes and don't open them once, and I'll tell you a story without any end."

"*Cruly?*" asked Tommy, popping up his head.

"Yes, truly, of course. Nobody ever lived long enough to hear the end. Once there was a little boy——"

"'Bout as big as me?" put in Tommy.

"No; smaller than you — with a little red mouth that was always laughing, and a little red tongue that was always chattering, and two red cheeks with dimples in the middle, and a whole cap full of red curls——"

"Usht you'd buy me some cap full

red curls," said Tommy, longingly; then suddenly started up to say, "Oh, papa, the bobber man bobbered all Siddie's curls off — didn't leave any bit of hair, clear down to the seeds of it."

"Now, Tommy," said papa, when he stopped laughing, "you mustn't talk. This little boy with red cheeks and red curls ——"

"Name Billy?"

"No; his name was Clarence, but they called him Corporal Trot. This little boy went down to the sea-shore with his papa and his nurse ——".

"Not his mamma?"

"No; poor little Clarence had no mamma. His dear mamma was dead," said papa very impressively.

"What deaded her?" asked Tommy.

"She was sick — very sick indeed —

and the doctor couldn't make her any better."

"Why didn't his papa buy 'nother one?" said unfeeling little Tommy; "they buyed a new mamma to Wally's house."

Papa went on with his story.

"Every day the nurse used to take Clarence and put a red flannel bathing suit on him and take him with her to bathe in the surf. They would stand on the smooth sand, holding fast by a rope, and the great waves would come rolling up and splash all over them, and almost lift them off their feet."

"Oh," said Tommy, sitting right up in bed, his eyes shining with delight at the thought, for Tommy was a regular little fish, and liked nothing so much as the water.

"It wasn't fun to Clarence," said papa, laying Tommy back on his pillow; "he hated the water because he was afraid of it; and when he saw it coming he would scream, and the salt water would get in his eyes and nose and mouth, and choke him ——"

"Oh, papa!" said Tommy, "I choked me awful, day after to-morrow, wid a bone to a peach, and Bridget shaked me till I unswallowed it."

"Tommy," said papa, desperately, "if you don't stop talking I shall have to go away."

"Don't you care anyfing 'bout your poor little Tommy got hurt?" demanded the youngster, in a plaintive tone; and papa tried again.

"Clarence hated his bath so badly that he used to puzzle his simple

"OH," SAID TOMMY, SITTING RIGHT UP IN BED, HIS EYES SHINING WITH DELIGHT.

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little brain trying to contrive ways to get rid of it. He used to hide, but nurse always hunted him up and dragged him out. One day his papa went to Boston, and when he came back he brought Clarence a little red wooden pail and a bright tin dipper, and he told nurse to put on his bath-suit, and let him go and play in the surf. That was jolly fun, I can tell you! He was a little fearful at first, but he soon got used to the spattering, and a very brilliant idea occurred to him. He saw how quickly the water disappeared when he poured it upon the sand; and he determined that he would dip up all the water in that great roaring, tumbling ocean and throw it away, so nurse would have no place to torment him. He worked like a beaver

all the morning, dipping up water and pouring it away, dipping up water and pouring it away, dipping up water and pouring it away——"

Papa's face was very sober, and he never once took his eyes from Tommy's, but kept on saying over and over, in a slow drawling tone,

"Dipping-up-water-and-pouring-it-away."

Tommy waited and waited to hear the rest of it; but papa kept on and on, and Tommy's eyelids began to drop lower and lower. He lifted his thumb once towards his half open mouth, and dropped it again; then he gave a sigh, and his eyes shut quite up.

"Poor little kitten," said mamma, softly, "his troubles are over for this time."

CHAPTER XV.

THE BIRTHDAY PARTY.

TOMMY was taking tea with Lulu Taylor on the back door step. The dishes had seen their best days, and the spread consisted principally of currants and some peanuts that Tommy found in his pocket. Lulu wanted some cake, but her mamma was away, and the girl was "scrosser'n two sticks," as the little lady reported. However, they made the best of it, and the cat looked on hopefully, and sniffed now and then at a peanut shell tossed to-

ward her. But when the peanuts gave out Tommy's interest gave out too.

"I don't fink this is any fun," he said.

"That's 'cause you're gettin' to be a *boy*," said Lulu, sitting up very straight. "I don't think you look nice at all; your curls cut off and horrid old boy's clothes on."

"H'm. These clothes are most new; 'sides they ain't my best ones too; and next week I'm five years old," said Tommy, triumphantly.

"Oh, my sakes! are you goin' to have a party?" said Lulu, eagerly.

"I guess so; if I want to," said Tommy.

"You'd ought to, Tommy Bancroft; everybody has to have birthday parties; You go and ask your mamma, and then I'll tell you just what we'll do 'bout it."

Tommy wasn't sure about the party, so he went in very leisurely, revolving in his mind a remark he had heard Uncle Jim make several times. "Parties were a *bore*," Uncle Jim declared, and Tommy wasn't sure he wanted one of those things, if Lulu did say so. But when he opened the matter to mamma, she approved of it very heartily, and informed the young gentleman she intended he should have a party once in five years, and as she was not very busy they would talk over the invitations at once.

"A regular party, you know, Tommy," said mamma, dipping her gold pen, and smoothing down the sheet of note paper before her.

"Yes, I know," said Tommy, who was sliding down the arm of the lounge;

"you have tickets like you do to the *musement* to see the monkeys."

"These are the tickets," said mamma, showing Tommy a pile of dainty little notes, on pale, rose-colored paper, with a splendid great B at the top. "Now you must tell me the names of the people you want to invite, and I'll put them on the envelopes."

Tommy gave one last slide, and came and stood by his mamma.

"May I sell the tickets?" he asked.

"Oh, we don't sell them," said mamma, "these are *invitations*, and you send them to the people."

"I fink they'd ought to pay," said Tommy. "Nobody can't come to my party 'thout they pay."

"Well," said mamma, "never mind that now; who shall I put down first?"

"We-e-ll," said Tommy, very deliberately, "le's ask grandma."

"Yes," said mamma, "I think she would like to come."

"An' Mr. Mike, down to the grocery. He gaved me a stick of candy oncet for nothing."

"But, Tommy," said mamma, "this is to be a children's party, and you mustn't invite grown folks."

"Mustn't I?" said Tommy. "Well, I wisht I knew that boy's name that sold me that red ink; I wouldn't ask him, would you, mamma?"

"No, you must only invite people of your acquaintance. There's Callie Trumbull, and Gracie Dean, and Sidney Lush, and Charlie Howard; you want them, don't you?"

"Yes, and, and, *Billy;* I'm 'quainted

of him. I guess I wouldn't ask Billy, would you, mamma?" said Tommy, watching his mamma's face like a wary politician.

"No," said mamma, decidedly, "you can't ask Billy;" and then she made out the list herself.

That very afternoon mamma and Tommy went out in the carriage to deliver the invitations, which to Tommy was no small part of the pleasure. John drove from house to house, and while mamma sat in the carriage, Tommy ran up the steps, rang the bell, and left his invitations. He was very firm in his conviction that he ought to ask twenty-five cents for a "ticket," but finally yielded the point when he found he *must*.

It was to be a sensible party, for Tom-

my's mamma was a great deal too wise to rob the little children of their bright eyes and rosy cheeks by keeping them out of their beds and feasting them with dainties, hours after they should have been asleep. So the invitations were all given for three o'clock; and as it was charming summer weather, the tables were spread in the yard, under the shade of the great oak trees.

Even before three, some of the impatient little guests made their appearance, the first clang of the door bell sending Tommy into an ecstasy of delight.

"I don't want you to untertain my company," he said to mamma, and forthwith took his position in the parlor, with only Totty to help him receive. Totty wasn't much of a talker, and at

the very first arrival she hid behind a big easy chair, from which her lovely golden head peeped out like a wee birdie from a nest.

Grandma was taking a nap after her long ride from the farm; and mamma and Aunt Alice were busy with the bouquets and wreaths for the table; so for a while the children were left to themselves, and sat in state around the room, looking shyly at each other, and talking in solemn whispers. Little Joey Webster made a sudden plunge from his corner, and said "Boo!" to Trotty, which caused a small giggle in the company, but his sister Nell held up her finger and cried "Sh-sh, Joey," as if they had been at a funeral. I don't know how long this would have lasted if Robbie Marsh had not brought his new jumping

jack in his pocket, and pulled it out and set it going. There was a rush for Robbie's corner, and in a moment the whole company of prim little people were laughing and talking merrily. Then more children came, and more and more, till they swarmed all over the house, and out into the yard, and you would have thought a troop of fairies had taken possession. And what do you suppose they played? Well, there were two swings with basket chairs, so that nobody could fall out, and there was a new croquet set, and then Uncle Jim was perfectly splendid. Why, he and Aunt Alice knew more games than ever were heard of, and I do believe they made some of them up on purpose. So they romped and laughed and had a real jolly time, all but two or three poor little things whose mam-

mas had dressed them up so very nicely they did not dare to stir for fear of spoiling their beautiful clothes or staining their white satin slippers.

They were playing "King Charles' Troops," when papa and mamma came to say that supper was ready. Uncle Jim began to marshal them two and two, but Tommy stoutly objected to taking the lead with little Totty.

"I want to go with my beau," said Tommy. "Lulu Taylor said we must go with our beaux; mamma, mamma, who is my beau?"

Callie Trumbull volunteered to go with Tommy, and as she was the biggest girl there, he finally consented, and soon the happy company was ranged on either side of the long table, looking with eager eyes at the wonderful pyra-

mids of pink and white ice cream, the great, luscious strawberries, glowing in their crystal dishes, the biscuits and the sandwiches, the tarts and the cakes without number, the nuts and candies and raisins. The children behaved grandly, every blessed little soul of them, much better than I have seen grown-up children behave on such occasions.

One tiny morsel of a girl, whom Uncle Jim was helping to strawberries, asked, in a quivering whisper,

"Mr. Bancroft, *when does it let out?*"

"What?" asked Uncle Jim, not quite understanding.

"Oh, the party; when does it let out?" said the midget.

"Oh, you can stay just as long as you please," said Uncle Jim.

"Goodey! then I mean to stay most all night," laughed the little girl.

When the children were eating their nuts and candies, somebody put little Dot Leonard up on the table, and she stood up as straight and stiff as a candy image and said some funny little verses about Tommy, and everybody laughed and clapped their hands, and made a great fuss over Dotty.

"You ought to make a speech, Tommy," said Uncle Jim.

"What shall I say it about?" asked Tommy, who liked the idea, "I know Humpty Dumpty, and another verse."

"Oh, you must thank the children for coming to your party, and say you hope they have had a good time," suggested Uncle Jim; and then he put Tommy on the table very quickly, for fear mamma

DOT LEONARD.

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would interfere, and Tommy looked about him like a lord, and began,

"Fank you very much for coming to my party, but you couldn't come 'thout I sended you the tickets. I'm glad you had a good time, and if there's any ice cream left, my mamma's goin' to send some to Billy. My papa buyed the birfday cake to the city, but mamma and Aunt Alice made all the rest, and squirted the crinkles round the edge wid a squirter full of frostin'. That's all. Take me down, Uncle Jim."

Mamma scolded Uncle Jim, but she laughed, too, and I know she thought it was funny.

By and by the carriages began to come for the little folks, and a few of the more independent went off alone.

"Don't you want some of the older

ones to go with you, Harry?" asked papa, as a little boy came up to take his leave.

"O, no," said Harry. "Why, I ain't afraid when it's as dark as a pitch."

But presently the little hero came back, saying, in a confidential whisper,

"Mr. Bancroft, I'm kinder 'fraid of June bugs." So he waited for company.

When they were all gone, and Tommy stood at the door watching the last carriage whirling down the street, Uncle Jim picked him up and asked,

"Well, Tommy Trotter, how do you like birthday parties?"

"I fink it's nice," sighed Tommy, wearily laying his head on Uncle Jim's shoulder. Presently he lifted it up to say, with sudden animation,

"Uncle Jim, wouldn't I had lots of money if they'd all paid?"

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